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ABSTRACT

In October, 1998, the Howard Community College (Maryland) board of trustees created a Commission on the Future (COF) to help the College identify emerging issues, prepare for the future, and develop a vision of the College's role in the 21st century. Task forces were established to conduct research, interview experts, and debate how the college should respond to seven emerging issues. These task forces, which were each co-chaired by business and community leaders, focused on the following areas: (1) creating a world class learning organization; (2) collaboration with other educational organizations; (3) collaboration with business and industry; (4) economic and workforce development; (5) preparing students as global citizens; (6) technology and education; and (7) communicating with current and new markets. This report provides a summary of the recommendations and advice of the seven task forces. Multiple objectives, and specific strategies to achieve each of these objectives, are presented for each area of interest. The report concludes with a list of the commissioners and task force members, and acknowledges those who have contributed to the preparation of this report. (VWC)

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ED 431 494

HOWARD COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Commission on the Future

The Report of the Commission on the Future of Howard Community College

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April 1999

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Commission on the Future
OF
HOWARD COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Acknowledgement

We extend our sincere gratitude and respect to individuals both inside and outside the college for their contributions to this remarkable report. To the community and business leaders serving on the Commission and its task forces, we were awed by your inspiration, dedication, and generous contributions of time and expertise. To the HCC faculty and staff, we admired your cooperation, professionalism, and good-humored willingness to accept the Commission's scrutiny.

Patrick Huddie
Chair, Commission on the Future

David Rakes
Chair, HCC Board of Trustees

Mary Ellen Duncan
President of HCC

Acknowledgement

Commission on the Future OF HOWARD COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Introduction

In October 1998 the Howard Community College Board of Trustees created a Commission on the Future (COF) to help the College identify emerging issues, prepare for the future, and develop a vision of the College's role in the 21st Century. Fifteen business and community leaders accepted the challenge of leading the Commission's seven task forces.

From November 1998 to March 1999 these groups conducted research, interviewed experts, and debated how the College should respond to emerging issues in technology, globalization, business and educational partnerships, workforce development, new educational markets, and organizational culture. The COF, under the leadership of Dr. Patrick Huddie, chair, and its task forces has developed an ambitious vision for the College in the 21st Century.

In April 1999, the Commission presented its report to the HCC Board of Trustees, faculty and administrators, who will consider the findings and recommendations as they develop the overall strategic plan for the college.

The seven task forces and their co-chairs were:

Creating a World Class Learning Organization
- Morris T. Keeton and Richard G. McCauley

Collaboration with Other Educational Organizations
- Robert N. Sheff and Gary L. Smith

Collaboration with Business and Industry
- C.E. "Ted" Peck and Virginia M. Thomas

Economic and Workforce Development
- Charles I. Ecker and Richard W. Story

Preparing Students as Global Citizens
- Maggie J. Brown and Barbara K. Lawson

Technology and Education
- Laura S. Johnson and Barbara Perrier Dreyer

Communicating with Current and New Markets
- Phyllis B. Madachy and Maurice M. Simpkins

Commission on the Future of Howard Community College

Vision and Principles

The Commission on the Future has drawn together the leaders of the community and the College to articulate a vision for the next phase of Howard Community College's life.

Vision:

Howard Community College is an evolving institution that purposefully provides learning and knowledge to the people of Howard County as needed throughout their lives.

Living Principles:

Howard Community College lives and works by the following principles:

1. HCC provides a gateway to a universe of growth and learning. HCC is culturally and geographically close to its community and can provide learning at convenient places and times (what you need to know, here and now). HCC aspires to be the preferred route to learning at other institutions.

2. Every person and part of the College understands and acts out the vision.

3. The College documents and recognizes success, initiative, and failure in order to improve all its processes, especially communications, and to ensure the availability of knowledge gained from experience.

4. HCC's Board of Trustees and staff are alert to their environment. They listen and respond to the external world. HCC is represented in many outside organizations and invites participation from a variety of community constituencies. News of changes and trends are communicated effectively throughout the College.

5. HCC manages its future through planning. Purposeful experimentation permits the organization to try new ideas, adopt those that work and discontinue nonviable ventures. Members of the College are rewarded for insight, initiative and success. HCC uses the new knowledge in planning activities in order to set its own agenda and to provide leadership to the community it serves.

6. Professional development is central to institutional success and growth. Supporting professional growth of all college employees improves the quality of instruction, learning and operations.

7. The College has exceptional potential to deliver comprehensive, high-quality learning by harnessing the intelligence and talent of the College and community.

New constituencies represent both resource needs and resource opportunities.

The Commission on the Future recognizes the extraordinary qualities of HCC's people. We applaud the College's past success and celebrate its justly deserved national reputation for quality, technology deployment and intelligent self-evaluation. We consider these accomplishments to be the necessary prelude and foundation for the next phase of evolution. The next step:

In an environment of rapid and dynamic change, HCC must become an agile, flexible, responsive organization.

Here follow our recommendations for the College, organized according to the seven task forces. Each group of recommendations includes a vision statement (in bold type), strategic process priorities, tactical action recommendations, and other ideas.

Commission on the Future OF HOWARD COMMUNITY COLLEGE

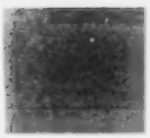
Executive Summaries of Task Force Reports

The Commission's report summarizes and presents an overview of the varied and far-reaching recommendations and advice of the seven task forces. The seven reports, including more detailed descriptions of findings, resource materials, minutes of the COF and its task forces, and supporting materials, are available upon request or can be found at the following Web address: http://www.howardcc.edu/future/

Task Force Summaries

Commission on the Future of Howard Community College

I. Creating a World Class Learning Organization



Task Force Co-Chairs: Morris T. Keeton and Richard G. McCauley

The College embraces a culture of experimentation, communication and commitment to bold change and accountability for the enhancement of lifelong learning for all constituents and for the College's own faculty, staff and trustees.

HCC is an agile organization that anticipates the needs of students and stakeholders. It continuously reexamines traditional roles, and makes changes in organizational structures and values to meet new opportunities. HCC recognizes that the College is, and will be increasingly asked, to serve functions beyond its traditional degree programs, and that these emerging functions will require new skills, competencies, resources, and new organizational goals and structures.

I-1 Build an agile organization that is responsive to students and other stakeholders. This organization should be able to move quickly and effectively and, by its skills, experience and attitudes, be fully capable of supporting the different functions and emerging businesses of the College.

I-2 Provide a structure that allows teams to form easily across normal organizational lines, staffed to optimize the particular skills and experience needed for the task, and that disappear easily as the task is accomplished or as needs change.

I-3 Build a climate of respect, trust, and open communication in which it is understood that the organizational structure or form of the College must continually evolve to meet the needs of the constituencies served.

I-4 The Commission identified and described six businesses within the College that serve potentially different core constituencies. The first three businesses are functions that the College has historically served: degree and certificate programs oriented toward transfer; programs oriented toward preparation for entry into the workforce; and programs for non-career and continuing education. The Commission also identified three new emerging businesses that it characterizes as entrepreneurial functions: economic development programs; workforce development programs; and community development programs. These businesses and how they affect the organization are described in greater detail in the task force report.

I-5 Develop structures that allow for learning to occur in a variety of ways: learning communities; cross discipline instruction; team teaching; and distance education.

I-6 Consider grouping some of the entrepreneurial businesses of the College together organizationally.

I-7 Maintain an inventory of the particular skills, competencies and experiences possessed by the people hired or assigned to various business functions. Use these characteristics in a matrix fashion for the benefit of other functional areas.

I-8 Support professional development initiatives which stress ongoing learning for faculty and staff and which are strategically aligned, particularly in the areas of most accelerated change; provide ongoing forums for faculty and staff to learn about the work of other functional businesses of the College and for discussing change issues.

I-9 Encourage creative thinking, support risk taking, and publicize, reward and celebrate successes, creativity and innovation.

I-10 Create an "intrapreneurial" unit to permit and provide support to individuals to pilot new initiatives and products/courses. Consider use of the Howard Business Ventures Board as a resource in this process. Add outside expertise to new or reorganized advisory groups and target these advisory groups to provide guidance and assistance to faculty and staff who have promising ideas that might be developed into programs beneficial to them and to the College.

Commission on the Future OF HOWARD COMMUNITY COLLEGE

II. Collaboration with Other Educational Organizations

Task Force Co-Chairs: Robert N. Sheff and Gary L. Smith

HCC is a leading participant in linking all institutions of higher learning and schools into an integrated learning system in Maryland.

The College must help to build a system of institutions built on the unique strengths and distinctive competencies of neighboring community colleges, local public and private schools, and the public and private universities in the area. Learners should be able to move easily through this system with each component adding unique and substantial value to the student. HCC, because of its leadership role in building this seamless system of learning, and because of its excellence in advising, teaching, and building upon its own programmatic strengths, will be a major force in effectively meeting the needs of learners.

II-1 HCC, along with the Howard County Public School System, four-year institutions of higher education, and representatives from the business community should form a regional K-16 partnership.

II-2 HCC should pursue the purposes of collaboration identified by the task force: strengthened and diverse programs, smooth transfer of knowledge, improved utilization of resources, student transfer, staff development, and workforce readiness.

Curricular and Programmatic Development:

II-3 Communicate with the University of Maryland on the need for keeping their computer inventory of course and program transfer agreements current. Determine what resources could be shared among Maryland community colleges and UM to help achieve this goal.

II-4 Develop improved state-wide coordination/management of articulation efforts.

II-5 Develop a template for use in conducting strategic planning at the programmatic level.

II-6 Improve mechanisms for the systematic identification and regular review of the

training needs of business and industry in Howard County and the region.

II-7 Standardize developmental course work, testing, and prerequisites across community colleges.

Professional Development of Faculty and Staff:

II-8 Research and recommend specific communication strategies for faculty members throughout K-16.

II-9 Research and recommend strategies for combined K-16 faculty and staff development opportunities, especially in content areas and in accommodation of different learning styles.

Student Assessment & Achievement:

II-10 Coordinate diagnostic evaluations throughout all of K-16.

II-11 Research and recommend strategies to deliver college/career readiness skills.

II-12 HCC and its educational partners should develop a strategic plan to connect HCC with Howard County public school students earlier in their academic careers to reduce the need for remediation.

II-13 Pioneer the development of electronic academic advising records that will facilitate a student's educational planning across public and private institutions. Electronic records would travel with the student with his or her permission.

Shared Resources:

II-14 Investigate and recommend strategies to share resources, including facilities, technology, administration, student activities, grant writing, etc.

II-15 Take advantage of distance technologies to explore international partnerships that enhance the global dimensions of HCC's programs. (see also Task Force report on Global Citizenship)

II-16 Create regular forums for higher education institutions and other providers to share information about resource issues and opportunities.

II-17 Research and recommend strategies for participating in community service activities.

II-18 Capitalize on the rich resources in the Baltimore-Washington area to provide joint programs and speakers on cultural activities.

II-19 Continuously evaluate progress of educational partnerships.

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III. Collaboration with Business and Industry

Task Force Co-Chairs: C. E. "Ted" Peck and Virginia M. Thomas

HCC is a central player in Howard County's economy. The College positions its highly talented faculty, staff and students so their knowledge and skills are easily apparent and available to the many businesses and community groups that profit from their expertise. College resources are organized to develop a broad range of relationships and partnerships.

The College must be more pro-active in developing opportunities to meet the needs of the community and of local businesses. To develop these positive relationships with the community and its businesses the college needs to be more aware of opportunities to lead and support the economic development of Howard County. It should develop a number of mechanisms, including a Board of Visitors that will encourage greater involvement with the community.

Establish a strategy to create and maximize partnership opportunities.

III-1 Recognizing that partnerships grow out of special relationships, the College needs to identify the relationships that already exist and determine areas not currently being served.

III-2 Create a senior position with responsibility for developing new business opportunities.

III-3 Develop strategies that go across department lines so that partnership opportunities can be expanded to provide financial, technical or equipment support for the College.

III-4 Recognize that while some ideas require funds, many of the ideas themselves would present opportunities for both mentoring programs and fund-raising contributions.

Become more pro-active than re-active in responding to the needs of the community.

III-5 Develop relationships with different groups of employers (for example, small businesses, large businesses, construction trades, health care providers, non-profits and public agencies) to understand their needs and how to assist them.

III-6 Perform analyses of competitors to determine the services HCC is best able to provide.

Establish Howard Community College as a major resource within the county.

III-7 Broaden involvement in community groups by identifying the most critical organizations and making sure that a college representative is actively involved in each of these groups as part of his/her job.

III-8 Identify a single or a few major points of contact within the College so that the community can more easily access the variety of services.

Provide a variety of business and professional exchanges and opportunities.

III-9 Convene a Board of Visitors that meets with the College on a regular schedule so that the staff and the Board of Trustees benefit from a wide spectrum of the community. (See Task Force Report for suggested activities of this group).

III-10 Establish mechanisms to grant recognition and give credit for non-credit courses through assessment so that there is an easier transition between the credit and credit-free courses.

[redacted]

Build relationships and partnerships:
An obvious first question is "relationships and partnerships with whom?" The groups most discussed by the taskforce and possible tactics to use with them are listed below:

III-11 Small businesses: Examples include English as a Second Language Institute (for Hispanics) offered in several locations; a package of construction mathematics offered in several locations; a Small Business Center; or marketing courses for art and music organizations.

III-12 Large businesses: for example Dale Carnegie style courses, or English as a Second Language Institute offered as an off-site program.

III-13 Non-profits: establish systems and methods for measuring size and impact of non-profits; organize internships; develop specific partnerships with Maryland Association of Non-Profits and the Association of Community Services.

III-14 Minority & Disadvantaged Groups (for example, women, Blacks, Asians, and Hispanics): establish entrepreneurial activities and opportunities; entrepreneurial training for youths; English as a Second Language Institute; and partnership with Dingman Institute-UMCP.

III-15 Health Establishments: Center for Allied Health Services (a centralized training and allied health center)

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III-16 Retired or people preparing to retire: luncheon lecture series; book clubs with outstanding teachers; study/travel courses partnered with travel companies (see also the Taskforce on Communicatiing with New Markets).

III-17 Community Leaders: Board of Visitors program; forum on community issues (regionalism, growth vs. "smart growth", etc.); resource support to Howard County Council for data collection and analysis.

III-18 Develop an aggressive marketing campaign that promotes the College as the first place to go to get help in problem solving and for educational and cultural opportunities. (see also the Taskforce on Communicatiing with New Markets).

III-19 Highlight the "stars" on the College staff, provide them maximum exposure to the community, and compensate them for these extra responsibilities.

III-20 Develop or acquire more comprehensive databases that can provide information on student backgrounds, county demographics, characteristics of new businesses in the county, and other statistics that will help shape a responsive educational program.

III-21 Other possibilities: use of facilities for sports and commercial sponsorship; residential component for international students; Total Quality Management courses for local businesses; and hosting citizenship meetings.

While it is entirely possible that HCC has already undertaken many of these activities, the recommendation is to make sure the business community is aware that these resources do exist and that they are encouraged to take advantage of them. It should also be noted that many of these initiatives present excellent opportunities for grant funding through government and private organizations.

IV. Economic and Workforce Development

Task Force Co-Chairs: Charles I. Ecker and Richard W. Story

The College monitors and responds to changing workplace and organizational expectations with customized programs that deliver general and specific skill training.

HCC is focused on changes in the workplace. As work becomes less task oriented and more people oriented, workers are required to be broadly skilled, able to think critically, make decisions, solve problems and effectively communicate with co-workers and customers. Beyond these core abilities and basic literacy and numeracy, the competencies that the modern workplace demands are:

Planning - establishing goals and scheduling and prioritizing activities
Obtaining and using information - deciding what is relevant and then putting it to use
Reasoning - evaluating and generating logical arguments
Peer training - informal and formal coaching and advisement
Initiative - demonstrated by thinking and performing independently
Cooperation - constructive, goal-directed interaction with others

In this world of rapid change, we are all faced with the constant acquisition of new knowledge. HCC deliberately facilitates continuous learning in both formal classroom sessions and informal situations like hallways, cafeterias, study groups, and the workplace.

IV-1 Develop processes and assign staff to stay informed about employer and employee training needs.

IV-2 Develop processes to continuously investigate the "skill sets" that will be needed for future jobs.

IV-3 Create a quick response capability to take advantage of emergent opportunities to respond rapidly to businesses needs.

IV-4 Keep the whole college in close touch with business practice and market demands by encouraging credit faculty to provide services to the Continuing Education and Workforce Development division.

IV-5 Incorporate work ethics, team skills, problem solving, and technology foundations into all college curricula.

IV-6 Seek partnerships to develop and share local and regional economic, employer and employment databases.

IV-7 Reorganize the research and planning unit to provide the data that will trigger the evaluation of current programs, the development of new programs and services, and the dissolution of obsolete programs.

IV-8 Develop an improved marketing effort and be part of the advance team that "welcomes" new business and potential business to the county.

IV-9 Engage faculty and students (e.g., Economics classes) in projects that provide, collect and analyze business trends.

IV-10 Streamline communications and processes so that leads are acted upon in a timely fashion.

IV-11 Expand existing training markets into areas like K-12 teacher training and on-line training.

Other Issues and Ideas:

Howard Community College needs to expand its use of E-commerce tools.

- Books should be available for ordering on-line, just in time.
- Registration should be available on-line (as the default).
- Program previews should be available, such as media clips of the courses and instructors.
- Establish a mechanism within the HCC Website to track which portions of the site are visited and for how long and begin to use that information.
- Survey newly enrolled students to find out what influenced their decision to register.

Commission on the Future of Howard Community College

V. Preparing Students as Global Citizens

Task Force Co-Chairs: Maggie J. Brown and Barbara K. Lawson

HCC prepares students to be competent and effective in a global society. Students understand and celebrate the interconnectedness of people and the impact of globalization upon their lives.

Specifically, the globally competent learner

1. accepts responsibility for global citizenship;
2. is committed to global, lifelong learning;
3. understands the impact of other cultures on life in the U.S.A.;
4. is aware of diversity, commonalities, and interdependence;
5. recognizes the geopolitical and economic interdependence of our world;
6. understands the non-universality of culture, religion, and values;
7. is aware of world demography;
8. is capable of working in diverse teams; and
9. is empowered by the experience of global education to help make a difference in society near and far.

Globalization is a pervasive influence on society in general and higher education in particular. It implies a diminishing importance of national borders and the strengthening of identities that stretch beyond those rooted in a particular region or country. Howard Community College provides an environment that inculcates good citizenship and a global perspective in students. Frequent review of these principles and changes in the world, sets HCC apart as a leader in developing a dynamic, responsive and relevant curriculum and in the nurturing of vibrant community and business partnerships.

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V-1 HCC should stimulate students to build a set of skills and knowledge with global relevance, including:

- awareness of and sensitivity to international business practices, customs and etiquette;
- the ability to apply learned skills in an international context;
- knowledge of the customs, literature, music and art of other cultures; and
- the ability to speak, write, and read a second language.

V-2 HCC should examine ways in which course content can reflect globalization and should implement appropriate curriculum revisions. A college-wide committee should

be established, including faculty, staff and students, to develop and implement global initiatives such as overseas training, business relationships, cultural events, international fairs and clubs, and exchange programs (Sister Cities, sister schools and internships).

V-3 The College should support these activities with internal resources and should also seek state and local funding, and grants to help support global initiatives. HCC should have a line item in the College budget for international programs.

[redacted]

Student, Faculty, Staff and Board of Trustees involvement in developing Global Competencies:

V-4 Secure the commitment of the Board of Trustees and the administration to revise the College's mission statement to include a global perspective.

V-5 Create a clearinghouse and designate a campus coordinator to develop and promote international and intercultural programs.

V-6 Support faculty development opportunities (e.g., the National Endowment for the Humanities seminars, Fulbright programs, and Rotary fellowships)

V-7 Support college and local area seminars on international business, language and culture.

V-8 Participate in the Community Colleges for International Development (CCID), American Council on International Intercultural Education (ACIIE), Maryland International Education Association (MIEA), Council on International Education Exchange (CIEE), College Consortium for International Studies (CCIS) and other global education organizations to gain information on model programs and funding opportunities.

V-9 Enhance communication about global efforts through internal newsletters, brown bag lunches, and invitations to staff and faculty to share what they have gained from seminar and conference attendance, exchanges, and specialized study.

V-10 Encourage multi-lingualism for all members of the College community.

V-11 Provide students, faculty and staff with opportunities to participate in local and regional cultural programs and with opportunities to access resources available through community organizations, museums and embassies.

Commission on the Future OF HOWARD COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Participation with Community Groups in Developing Global Competencies:

V-12 Partner with the Howard County public school system in developing courses and programs that promote global competencies (i.e., languages, customs, geography).

V-13 Build an inventory of international resources for the institution and community.

V-14 Establish links with businesses, seeking their support and involvement in global education.

V-15 Increase links with ethnic constituencies and community organizations such as sister cities, religious organizations, language schools, service clubs, chambers of commerce, and trade associations.

V-16 Consult with potential customers to identify and develop programs.

V-17 Offer incentives to students and faculty to develop innovative international programs utilizing visiting dignitaries, artists and exchange students.

Other Issues & Ideas—Technology and Global Initiatives:

- Utilize information technology, including distance learning and teleconferencing, e-mail, and the World Wide Web.

- Continue to aggressively integrate technology into the way languages are taught.

- Develop specific global contacts that can identify emerging technical issues and implement appropriate technological strategies that advance the College's global opportunities.

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VI. Technology and Education

Task Force Co-Chairs: Laura S. Johnson and Barbara Perrier Dreyer

Howard Community College uses advanced technology tools to deliver learning. It perpetually monitors and evaluates new technology, learning outcomes, and the technology competencies needed to function in a high-technology world

New information and communications technologies will continue to expand and change ways of delivering learning. Rapid changes in the workplace and in society are creating both the need and the opportunity for on-time, distance learning systems; and changes in information and communications technology are providing mechanisms for increasing the effectiveness of learning. These changes will require HCC to constantly examine:

1. how it delivers learning opportunities;
2. the needed competencies of those who will use emerging technologies to learn and be economically productive;
3. how to teach these competencies; and
4. how new technologies will affect the operation of the College and the expectations of the College's students.

The College's Technology Platform:

VI-1 The State's policy of treating the purchase of technology as a current year expense rather than as a capital purchase impedes the College's ability to stay current with industry. The College should therefore be actively represented on the State-wide task forces evaluating funding levels and mechanisms and should push to improve the current government budgeting and procurement practices.

VI-2 Evaluate the College's abilities to expand leasing arrangements under current procurement guidelines.

VI-3 Standardize the purchase and usage of certain software systems to reflect those systems most commonly used in industry. Currently that means Microsoft or Novell for the network, Microsoft for office applications, and Microsoft or Oracle for large database products.

VI-4 Administrative systems should represent those in use by other community colleges, wherever possible, with minimal customization.

Commission on the Future of Howard Community College

VI-5 Provide support for faculty and staff attendance at leading community college technology conferences.

VI-6 Do not enter into long-term contracts for communication lines or products, even at the expense of current operations, since cost structures are decreasing rapidly and the best solutions are also changing. It does not pay to be locked into a particular provider.

VI-7 Establish a permanent Technology Advisory Committee of industry Chief Information Officers to provide feedback on the College's technology plans.

We support the College's current practices in the following areas and urge that they be continued:

VI-8 Continue the current practice of managing technology through an overall Technology Plan. Such a plan should be reviewed annually with the assistance of the Technology Advisory Board recommended above.

VI-9 Establish policies and procedures for providing the technology appropriate for teaching each program and appropriate for the operational needs of each unit. For example, the most advanced technology should be placed where advanced technology skills are being taught.

VI-10 Maintain a standard desktop configuration and have policies in place to prevent non-standard programs from being used without permission. We note that this is difficult to enforce.

VI-11 Training is key to achieving productivity improvements from technology. We encourage the College to use its own catalog classes and certification programs to provide training for its staff.

Delivery of Distance Learning:

VI-12 Continue to focus on the individual students, organizations and businesses of Howard County that are interested in the convenience of attending classes at a distance.

VI-13 Continue the College's involvement with the Maryland Community College Teleconsortium as a means of expanding access to other students in Maryland.

VI-14 Focus on courses with the greatest demand by Howard County residents and in support of high demand specializations.

VI-15 Set market-driven criteria for developing technology-aided courses, and evaluate and act on the results of market research in deciding which courses to deliver.

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VI-16 To determine courses in high demand, students in currently popular classes or programs should be surveyed to ascertain interest in distance education courses.

VI-17 Track distance education courses and students by delivery method – i.e. televised, videotape, and web-based. Courses with low student registrations should not be continued.

VI-18 Budget for an on-line curriculum development specialist who would serve as a resource for faculty and who could provide recommendations on course standards.

VI-19 This curriculum specialist should review all distance education classes to ensure consistent quality and ease of use, and to ensure that course content is compatible with minimum technology standards.

VI-20 Investigate commercial sources for on-line courses and partner with other colleges or companies that are willing to create on-line content in return for revenue-sharing opportunities.

VI-21 Identify a training class for faculty on how to teach at a distance. This course should be offered using a distance format. All faculty who are teaching in this environment should be required to complete such a course so they have been in the student role in this new type of learning. We note that funding will be required for this effort.

VI-22 Increase the use of chat and voice delivery systems at required times for some portion of each course. Emphasize web-based course delivery for future distance education offerings. We support the College's choice to use a client-less (i.e. no download required) environment.

VI-23 The College's selection of "Web CT" was a good one. However, reevaluate this decision at least every two years to ensure that this selection remains the best mechanism for developing and delivering on-line courses.

VI-24 Provide a separate listing of distance education courses in the printed course catalog.

VI-25 Courses listed on the College's web-site should be easily identified by type of delivery. The distance education courses listed on the College's web-site should be identified as "distance education" courses, rather than "on-line courses", since not all courses are on-line. Courses should be listed by topic areas so that a student interested in an economics class does not have to scroll through the entire list of offerings.

VI-26 Distance education courses listed on the College's web site should be reviewed to ensure compliance with minimum standards for required information.

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VI-27 Continuing students should be able to complete the entire registration process while they are on-line.

VI-28 Investigate partnerships to promote distance education offerings. When a premier class has been developed, explore business arrangements with commercial and non-profit entities that distribute such material.

VI-29 Ensure that the College has clear and unambiguous ownership of all intellectual property included in distance education courses.

VI-30 All advertising materials should make reference to the availability of distance education offerings.

VI-31 Establish a recommended minimum system configuration for students taking classes on-line. The standard should be reviewed periodically to accommodate changes in technological developments. Students in on-line courses should have an e-mail account and Internet access through an Internet Service Provider (ISP).

VI-32 The College needs to gather more information about the outcomes of its distance education offerings. For example, course drop rates for each type of distance delivery should be compared to each other and to the rates for similar courses offered on-campus. On-line course evaluation surveys should be available for on-line classes and should include questions specific to the on-line experience. Levels of student satisfaction should be tracked by each type of distance delivery and should be compared to each other and to the levels of satisfaction for the same courses offered in classrooms. Grade distributions should also be compared in the same fashion.

VI-33 Faculty members should complete an evaluation of their experience in teaching these classes

Minimum Technical Competencies required of HCC graduates:

VI-34 ALL HCC graduates should be required to meet a minimum standard of technology competency. Develop a baseline of required technical skills for all graduates and review this set of skills annually in comparison with outside practices.

VI-35 The Task Force, after surveying local businesses, developed a current list of such basic technical competencies (see the Task Force report).

VI-36 Create an internal committee to evaluate this set of skills, compare it to competency standards prepared by other organizations, and formally adopt a set of minimum standards for the technical competency of all HCC graduates.

VI-37 In cooperation with a technical advisory group of local employers this set of skills should be evaluated annually.

VI-38 Develop a course that would provide these competencies.

VI-39 Develop a certification test for those students who have already obtained these skills so that they can "test out" of this requirement. Such a skills test should have additional market value as an offering to the business community for evaluating new employees or qualifying employees for various positions.

VI-40 Revenue derived from this course, student testing, and administering this test for employers should be sufficient to cover the costs of developing this test and course.

VI-41 Prepare a business plan for this certification program. The plan should include the marketing opportunities available for a mandated basic competency test and course.

Unfinished Business:

The committee had a number of discussions about how to ensure access to computers to all HCC students. There are a number of colleges and universities that have taken the approach that all students must have a computer and an Internet account. We are concerned that the community college tradition of open enrollment for all was designed to eliminate stringent entrance requirements, whether those requirements be academic or financial. Requiring a computer and Internet access may not be consistent with this philosophy.

However, rather than abandon this concept, the College needs to continue to review this issue of access. It may be possible to structure financial aid in such a fashion that students unable to pay for computer and Internet access would be able to obtain the necessary funds. The College might pursue grants to provide laptops for check out at the library in much the same way that a student today can obtain videotapes. There may also be other creative ways to obtain universal Internet access and email. Several such opportunities were suggested in the section of this Task Force report discussing partnering opportunities.

VII. Communicating with Current and New Markets

Task Force Co-Chairs: Phyllis B. Madachy and Maurice M. Simpkins

Howard Community College continually monitors and responds to the changing needs of different elements of the community. HCC uses efficient and sophisticated communication methods to inform and attract potential students and enlighten stakeholders.

The College should strengthen both its ability to understand the needs of its current and potential students, and its ability to develop and market courses, learning resources, and its community image as a flexible, responsive, student centered organization that can deliver educational success. The College should position itself as the obvious and preferred point of entry for all post-high school learning, and as the most convenient point of access to high quality learning opportunities.

VII-1 The College must develop a strategic plan for growth. A commitment to growth is assumed, and beginning at the policy level, HCC must take the steps necessary to support growth and sustain or increase quality. The county population is growing, the school population booming, the workforce increasing and the senior population expanding.

VII-2 HCC must develop a marketing plan with defined goals and objectives. Marketing needs to become an integral function of the College administration, and the College must provide the necessary resources to implement marketing goals.

VII-3 HCC would like to expand its programs for the growing senior population, but this has revenue implications given the State of Maryland's policy of granting free tuition for seniors. The College should study the fiscal impact of expanding programs to seniors. The College must address this issue with senior groups, other community colleges in Maryland, and the legislative and executive branches of the State Government, with the goal of retaining universal access at community colleges while developing new ways to serve this important age group.

Marketing

VII-4 Create a dedicated marketing position. Development and implementation of a marketing plan, collection and analysis of market data, development of a position

statement, and other activities are too critical to HCC's future to be segmented within the administration.

VII-5 Adopt a policy of continuous improvement in marketing and continue to seek input from the outside world, especially the business community, for marketing advice, benchmarking, and examples of best practices.

VII-6 Gather and use student information to market new products and services, assess and forecast trends and identify good customers. Existing information systems should be enhanced as needed to help HCC market itself better. Then the student database can be mined to identify the best customers and to garner more like them.

VII-7 Develop reliable and up-to-date market data to better serve its key markets. The lack of data hampers HCC's ability to improve current offerings and develop new products for key markets.

VII-8 Identify and ask HCC's best individual and business customers what they like about the HCC experience and what they would like to see improved - and use the feedback to fix the problems they identify.

Recruiting

VII-9 We recommend that HCC increase its market share of transfer students as a specific marketing goal. This action will strengthen the stability of HCC by ensuring a continuous and growing source of enrollment. Expansion of HCC's buildings and facilities must be considered.

VII-10 Active and focused recruiting of students requires HCC to create a discrete recruiting function as a necessary and strategic complement to the existing admissions process. Full-time and part-time transfer students are the backbone of the College's credit programs. HCC has been the gateway to educational success for numerous individuals, and can easily be marketed as the road to a bright future.

VII-11 Identify and include as prospective future students those residents of Howard County who attend private schools.

VII-12 Identify those articulation agreements that are most valuable (in terms of student outcomes) and focus marketing and market research resources on these transfer colleges. Seek new agreements of similar or higher quality. Articulation agreements with four-year colleges like Johns Hopkins University are very powerful recruiting tools. Use peer experiences to market to potential transfer students.

VII-13 Market the cost-benefit of two years at HCC to students (and parents) followed by two years at a superior university as the smart way of getting a better four-year

degree, for the same money, compared to four years at a lower quality university.

Positioning

VII-14 The College should articulate a strategic market position that allows it to successfully compete with other providers. HCC should be perceived as the obvious and preferred point of access to learning. The image of the College should be the on-ramp to the learning highway, the portal to success, the gateway to knowledge. HCC should also be seen as a high-quality learning experience in the markets that it chooses to serve. A flexible, responsive, customer-centered learning experience should be available to all. The whole college community must live and breathe the position that HCC gives the customer "What You Need To Know Now!"

VII-15 Promote HCC's capability for training the trainers. The public perception that HCC produces quality instructors supports HCC's image as a quality learning organization.

VII-16 Consider developing a membership-based learning experience offering seminar style learning opportunities and linked with activities such as museum visits, trips, and social events. This should not require any new resources for HCC, but is simply a repackaging of current resources in a product targeted to the adult learner. HCC has a singular advantage of convenient access over other colleges and universities (University of Maryland and Johns Hopkins) who are also trying to reach this market. Market the personalities and qualities of the instructors involved here and in other postioning activities

VII-17 Articulate the benefits HCC offers to students clearly in a unified communications across all HCC products and services. Suggested benefits to the learner are:

Cost effective education
High quality of education
Responsive to the student customer
Convenient locations
Seamless transfer to outstanding educational institutions

VII-18 There are functions in the College that could be branded independently while remaining an integral part of HCC. HCC itself does not have a negative image, but community colleges in general do suffer from a stereotyped bargain-basement image. The example of the Business Training Center is useful. Among the business community the BTC is seen a quality provider of training first and part of HCC second. HCC's strong programs in Information Technology and Allied Health seem to be obvious candidates for strategic branding (e.g. Central Maryland IT Institute, Columbia Allied Health College).

VII-19 Develop specific plans to form partnerships with other non-educational community organizations which have similar missions, or which serve a market segment attractive to the College. Potential partners include the Department of Recreation and Parks, Columbia Association, Office on Aging, Leadership Howard County, and Columbia Foundation. The partnership activities benefit HCC by (a) increasing the College's ability to network in the community, and (b) Reducing inefficient overlap with other organizations.

Promotion

VII-20 Use diverse tools for marketing: television, radio, and local publications that have limited distribution but devoted readership such as ZIP 21042 and 21043, and Village News. The latter publications are inexpensive but are effective channels to promote HCC.

VII-21 Create a coordinated range of marketing materials, including promotional literature and multimedia (audio, video, and Web) segments, as well as giveaway artifacts, for example "Thinking Caps", "Mighty" HCC pens, and "Cutting Edge Technology" letter openers. Devise frequent student discounts, "bring a friend" bounties, and other relationship promotions.

VII-22 Segment promotional efforts intelligently; for example: co-market distance learning and cable modems together with the local cable company. Use radio segments, especially PBS, to market business training to regional businesses and their employees. Use Direct mail to inform alumni and previous customers of courses that are targeted to their previous interests. Use the alumni and previous customers to reach the general county population with a "Bring a Friend" program. Provide college employees, business customers and friends of the College with promotional materials for them to distribute to people they meet.

Other Marketing Ideas:

VII-23 Consider articulation agreements with graduate schools, such as the APL program or Johns Hopkins Medical School, where HCC can provide prerequisite and other courses to reentering adult learners.

VII-24 To better reach the senior market, use the Howard County's Office on Aging *Senior Connection* to advertise classes that are under-enrolled.

VII-25 Look hard at the growing pool of educated, skilled people who are 50-60, and leaving full-time jobs for part-time jobs. Work with this group of residents as potential students, faculty and mentors.

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VII-26 Use the ten senior centers as satellite learning sites for all the community, not just seniors. This will increase the effective physical space of the College.

VII-27 Provide incentives for distance learning students by heavily discounting tuition and fees. These incentives should increase the number of distance-learning students. These discounts should also redirect seniors and other free-tuition students to low-cost , but equally valuable, distance learning experiences that have zero impact on buildings and facilities.

VII-28 If courses are marketed aggressively, as they should be, classes will be oversubscribed until the capacity of the College grows to match. Devise new ways of allocating seats in popular classes. Currently these places are rationed by timing with only the early registrants getting to enroll. However, this is not a solution since it only defers the problem to the next semester. Debate, for example, auctioning some or all seats in these classes, or providing early-bird discounts and late-bird penalties. Also devise a more intelligent method to allocate scarce places to seniors, instead of on a first-come, first-served basis.

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